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THE FOUNTAIN OF LOVE.



OUR engraving, 'The Fountain of Love,' is after a painting by Jean Ernest Aubert, of Paris, one of the late Paul Delaroche's pupils, and an eminent master of the French school. Aubert is celebrated for the poetry of his subjects and the graceful style in which they are treated. A youth and maiden are kneeling at the edge of a fountain arm in arm, and gazing into its pearly depths. Cupid stands expectant behind them, as if to watch the effect of the revelation of love which the fountain prefigures ere he launches his dart. Aubert possesses a highly-poetic temperament, and this

part of his nature is apparent in all of his works. He composes his subjects prettily, draws well, and there is a sense of harmony expressed in his colouring which is not excelled in the works of any of his contemporaries. Critically, Aubert's sense of colour is stronger than his conception of form; hence he is seen at his best in these pleasant little love-stories, which have the dreamy suggestiveness of poetry. His 'Réveil,' in the *Salon* of 1873, was also a good example of his peculiar style. Aubert has always been a favourite artist with the collectors in this country, and many of his works are in our private galleries. 'The Fountain of Love' belongs to Mr. J. Abner Harper, of Harper & Brothers.

THE HOMES OF AMERICA.

"OLD MORRISANIA."

GOVERNEUR MORRIS was the *preux chevalier* of the Revolutionary period. We had striking and individual men at that epoch. Men made the times, and times made the men; both were extraordinary. Washington, Hamilton, Burr, Schuyler, Jay, Jefferson, and Morris, are all original, peculiar, individual men—"such as a nation needs, such as a nation breeds," in its

earlier throes; but amid them all, Morris stands out large, generous, gay, witty, with both popular and commanding talents, a man whom men respected and whom women admired. He went through life eating the sunny side of the peach, but not throwing away the stone, a remarkable mixture of self-indulgence and self-control, of warm blood and of cool brain, dashing, enterprising, and



"Old Morrisania," Morrisania.

lavish, but controlling all these sometime dangerous gifts with prudence and method, and with that admirable balance of all the qualities which we erroneously call *common-sense*.

Indeed, this was a strong and a gifted race. Governors, judges, and statesmen, the Morrisses were ever emulous of public service, men deeply penetrated with love of country, and bearing such weight in the community in which they lived that we find them

always in positions of trust—captains of thousands. Gouverneur Morris's father was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence—our American peerage! A curious instance of Toryism occurs, however, in this patriotic family: one son, Staats Long Morris, became an officer in the British Army and married the Duchess of Gordon, became a member of Parliament, and died in England.

"It is my desire," says Lewis Morris, in his will, "that my son,

Gouverneur Morris, may have the best education that is to be had in England or America." Like all distinguished men, young Morris had a wise mother; she sent him first to the house of a French teacher in New Rochelle, where he acquired early the language of which he was afterwards to make good use, then to Columbia College, then to the study of the law. Acuteness, skill in discussion, and power of argument, had always belonged to his family, but he had more genius, eloquence, and versatility, than any of them. He had, too, a practical mind, which he afterwards showed in his knowledge of affairs, and his success in making a fortune. In fact, Gouverneur Morris was a "new departure," a success, an original man.

Looking back from his life in Paris, it is a curious instance of "coming events casting their shadows before," that he wrote as his first essay in college a treatise on "Wit and Beauty."

The boy of sixteen was father to the man, who later on flirted learnedly with Madame de Staël, gaily with the Duchess of Orleans, and Madame de Chastellux, and who admired and pitied Marie Antoinette, and who was, it is whispered, a gay and favoured gallant at the court of Versailles.

He wrote also on "Love of Country," which was an absorbing and life-long passion with this generous man. He was to bear a bold, consistent, and distinguished part in our Revolutionary struggle, and his latest utterances are as patriotic as were his earlier ones.

At the age of eighteen the clever boy wrote anonymously, deprecating the evils of a paper currency as a mischievous pretence for putting off the day of payment—a pamphlet which would not be inappropriate to this enlightened age.

Three months before he was twenty years of age Gouverneur Morris was licensed to practise as attorney-at-law in the State of New York.

His aristocratic family connection, his good looks, his extraordinary and precocious talents, had all been fighting his battle for him, and he knew that he could step into a large practice at once, but his active spirit demanded a wider sphere.

Perhaps he thought, with Valentine, that "home-staying youths have ever homely wits." He longed to go to England, to form his mind and manners, as he says, on some worthy model. "Nothing is so dangerous," says this wise, witty, flattered boy—"nothing is



Entrance Hall, "Old Morrisania."

so dangerous as that vain self-sufficiency which arises from comparing ourselves with companions who are inferior to us." A boy of twenty who knew enough to say that was beyond being hurt by the fact itself. But his mother, his friends, and his small fortune, kept him at home for a few years. He went into his profession industriously, and worked hard.

Fortunately, he remained in this country, and was ready to be a member of the first Provincial Congress of New York, which was convened in 1775, and helped to build up that curious fabric, so strong, so weak, so vague, so peculiar, which we call the American Republic, which has been, in spite of its mistakes, so marvellously successful.

From that time forth, the history of Gouverneur Morris is the history of this country. The great friend of Washington, the industrious member of Congress, projecting Franklin's work in France, chairman of three committees for carrying on the war (the Commissary's, Quartermaster's, and Medical Department), he showed an industry which was superhuman, an unselfish patriotism which was noble, and an energy which was gigantic. He wrote essays on all subjects, particularly on the vexed and interesting questions of revenue and the currency; he worked hard at his profession for his support while in Congress; and he has left behind him records of a consistent, patient, and patriotic endeavour, which

would suffice to ennoble a life of eighty years, but which was but the prelude to his—in fact, all this was accomplished before he was twenty-eight years of age!

Then came an accident which would have crushed a less indomitable will. He was thrown from a carriage in Philadelphia, and broke his leg. His physicians advised immediate amputation. It was said later that this was a proof of the unskilful management, and the rashness of decision, of his attending physician. Be that as it may, he bore it with courage, elasticity, and cheerfulness. Perhaps he justly thought that Gouverneur Morris could go faster and better on one leg than most other men on two; his jollity did not desert him. A clergyman called on him to advise patience, telling him that perhaps this sad event might improve his character, and diminish the inducements to lead a gay life which otherwise surrounded him.

"My good sir," said Mr. Morris, "you argue the matter so handsomely, that I am almost induced to part with my other leg." A plain wooden leg was fitted to the stump, and carried this brave man through the rest of his life. He was tall and personable, proud of his remaining leg, which was very handsome, such a limb as Queen Bess is said to have admired among the ranks of her sturdy courtiers.

He went on working for his country, helping to organise com-

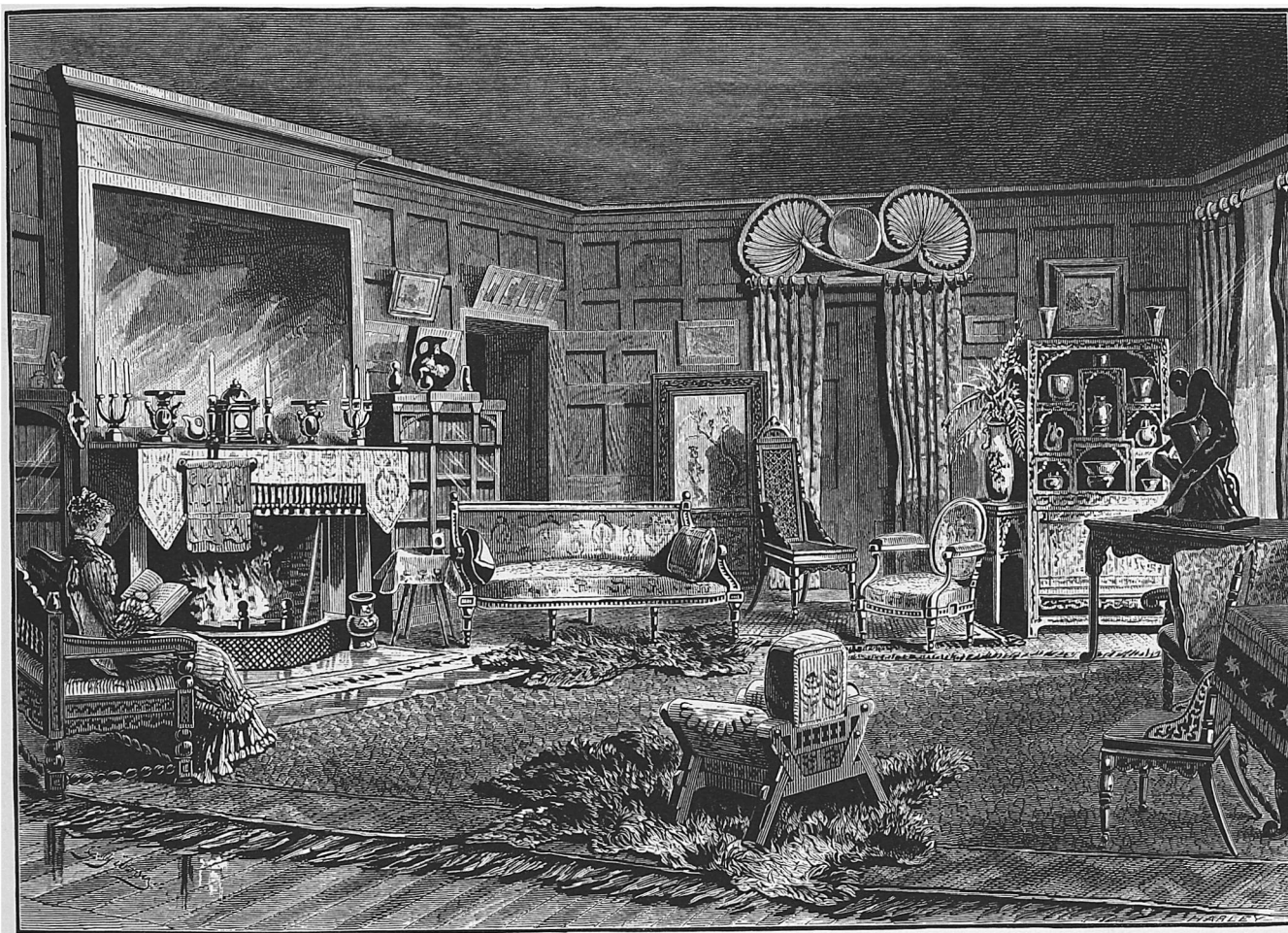
mittees in Congress, and writing out such sketches of the characters necessary to men who should fill the important offices of Minister of Finance, War, the Marine, and particularly of Foreign Affairs, that an incoming President could not do better than to read them now. He was assistant financier to Robert Morris, became commissioner for the exchange of prisoners, corresponded with Mr. Jay about French affairs; in fact, was everywhere, did everything that was patriotic and helpful, and finally visited Morrisania after the peace, for the first time in seven years.

He writes to his uncle that he drinks his health "in a bottle of Cape wine, which has stood on the shelf for twenty years." This estate of Morrisania later had claims for depredations committed by the British Army during the war. They were afterwards paid, to the amount of eight thousand pounds. It is amusing to read the particulars of those depredations now on that beautiful lawn,

consecrated to lawn-tennis, and, as the steamers sail by to sea, to think of Gouverneur Morris's first voyage, when he finally achieved his hoped-for intention of going to Europe in 1788, and endured a long and cheerless winter passage of forty days on the ship *Henrietta*.

He was freighted with letters from General Washington. The first two he presented were to Jefferson and to Lafayette; and some idea of the many-sidedness of Mr. Morris's gifts may be given by the fact that he records in his diary that one of Lafayette's little daughters sang for him, after dinner, a song of his own composition. When did this busy young American statesman find time to write songs?

He kept a diary of his life in Paris, which reads like an historical romance. From the immediate dash which he made into the very highest society one derives the most favourable impression of what



Reception Room, "Old Morrisania."

must have been his appearance and manners. He was not yet forty; he had made a splendid reputation at home; he was well introduced; but these great advantages would not have procured him the success which he achieved socially had he not possessed that magnetism which wins with a look and conquers with a smile. Through his long life he always received the admiration, respect, and confidence of women; and a sketch of his character by a French lady is so very clear and so beautiful that it deserves to be copied and read as a specimen of grateful eulogy.

He went out to the famous opening of the States-General at Versailles, which has been called "the first day of the Revolution." It is touching to read now the following extract from his journal, written on May 4, 1789:

"I cannot help feeling the mortification which the poor queen meets with, for I see only the *woman*, and it seems unmanly to treat a woman with unkindness. Madame de Chastellux tells me a sprightly reply of Madame Adelaide, the king's aunt, who, when the queen, in a fit of resentment, speaking of this nation, said,

"Ces indignes Français!" exclaimed, "Dites *indignés*, madame." Poor Marie Antoinette!

In 1792, Gouverneur Morris was appointed minister from the United States to the court of France, and added ambassadorial honours to those which he had won for himself.

It is really curious in looking over the full records of this illustrious man to observe the aid, pecuniary and otherwise, which he extended to distinguished persons. He lent money to Madame de Lafayette, to Louis Philippe, to the Duchess of Orleans, and to hundreds of others less distinguished. Among his papers are found to-day letters from many titled personages to whom he extended his always liberal hand.

Of his efforts for the escape of the king and queen, his noble care of the trusts committed to him by them, history is so full that it would be absurd to enter into the details here.

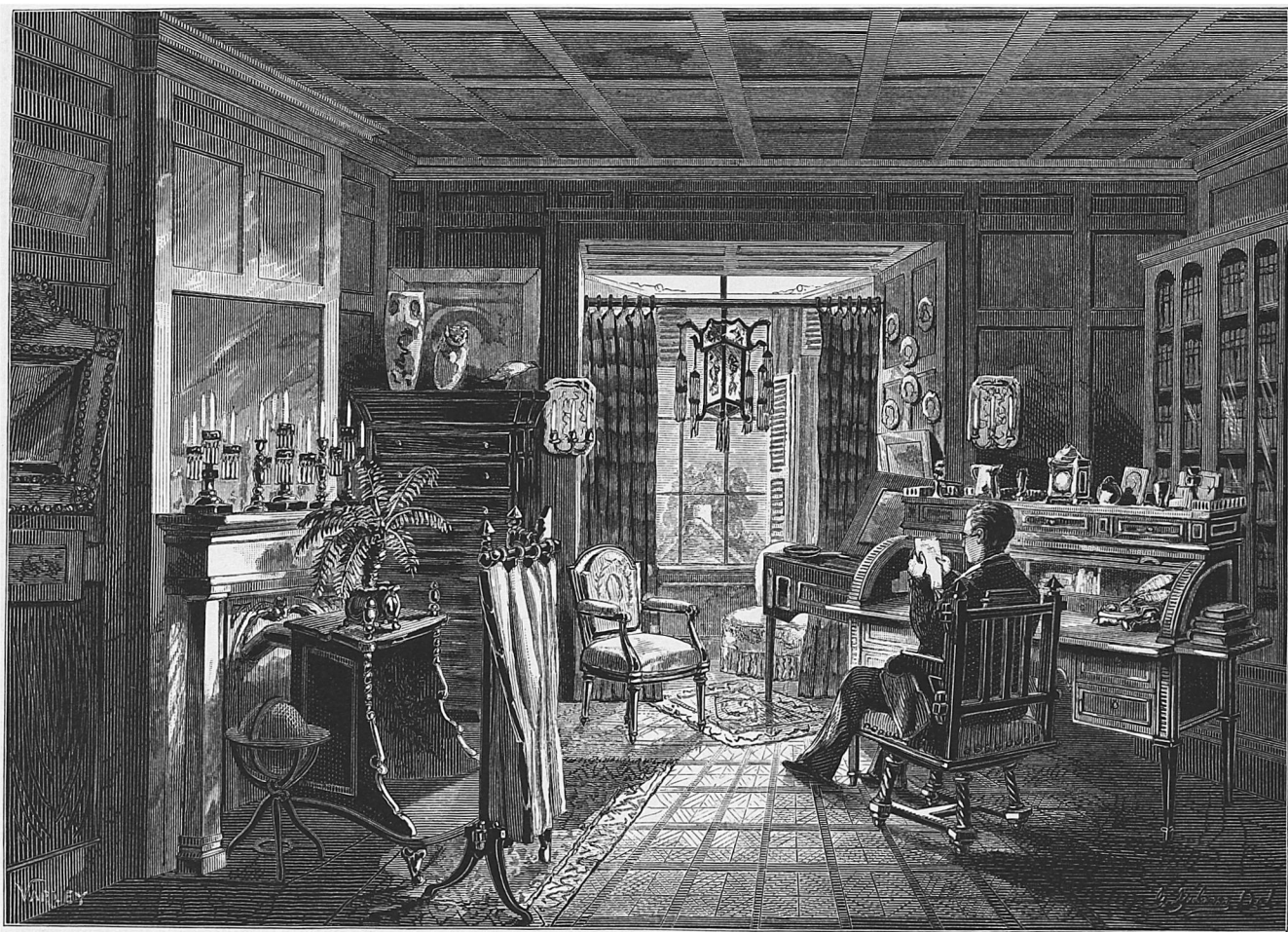
"Old Morrisania," the home purchased by Gouverneur Morris of his brothers in 1789, is situated on the Harlem River, just

where the East River joins it; and, although hidden from view by an island, the vexed waters of Hell Gate are nearly opposite. The peninsulas, bays, inlets, islands, peculiar to the junction of two rivers seeking the sea, the distant view of Long Island Sound—all go to make up a scene of tranquil and exquisite beauty.

Here, after pulling down the old house of his ancestors (for Morris has lived on this spot since 1673), he built in 1800 a sort of French château. It stands to-day, with some of the rooms as he left them, with much of the old furniture which he used in his rooms in the old French days, intact, one of the few historical houses in this land which is still, and which has been continuously, in the hands of the descendants of the original family.

The library is especially interesting. The floor is parquet, imported from France, and, dark and polished as it is, one wonders that a one-legged man did not find it slippery and dangerous, but

his long residence in France had made it easy for him to walk on slippery ground; he put parquet floors all through his house, having imported them. The desk at which he sat and wrote all his letters and despatches during the Reign of Terror is in this room. Here may be the secret drawer where he deposited the 748,000 livres which the poor weak king sent him, to aid in the *Monciel* scheme for the project of removing the royal family from Paris—money which did no good to the depositors, and which must have been an inconvenient charge to the minister. We find him later paying back the money left in his hands to the unhappy Duchess d'Angoulême, the daughter of Louis XVI.—she who bore in her sad face until death the marks of indelible grief. This fine old piece of furniture is of mahogany, dark with age, and is brass-bound. It bears marks upon it of having been in a royal house, and was possibly a present to Mr. Morris from some of the fami-



Library, "Old Morrisania."

ly whom he so well served. There are three or four other pieces of the same date and history, beautiful and historical bits. The old desk leads now a luxurious and tranquil existence in the midst of quiet domestic bliss, serving the lady of the house, silently, as she writes her graceful notes of invitation or of friendship, as it did her grandfather when he wrote letters of encouragement and helpful sympathy to a queen, besought Austria to relieve Lafayette from the horrors of Olmütz, defended himself against the intrigues of Tom Paine, corresponded with the Bishop d'Autun, Madame de Staël, or the Duchess of Orleans, wrote those rose-coloured epistles, no doubt, which belong to one side of the character of this pleasure-loving, gallant, gay man, who followed out Luther's motto amid his full career of usefulness; and where he recorded the sanguinary horrors of the French Revolution, until even his beloved journal had to be given up; and he wrote at this same desk these words: "The situation of things is such that, to continue this journal would compromise many people, unless I go on as I have done since the end of August, in which case it

must be insipid and useless. I prefer, therefore, the more simple measure of putting an end to it."

The library is wainscoted and ceiled with Dutch cherry panels, also imported, and was in the early days hung with superb white-and-gold tapestry, like Marie Antoinette's boudoir at Versailles—tapestry which has long ago succumbed to "Chronos' iron tooth."

It is a very interesting room; a deep bay-window commands the sunset, and modern taste has hung a Chinese lantern in the window, indicative of that march towards the East which humanity is always making. This lantern, with the prehistoric dragon, and the curious reversed perspective of the Chinese, the circled emblem of the serpent, with his tail in his mouth—all is suggestive of philosophical reflection; it seems to say: "So do we go back whence we came, nor pause except for a moment to think over even the French Revolution, but as one of the hideous and bloody tints which the monster shows as he slowly creeps away."

The reception-room, twenty-two by thirty, and fourteen feet high, is, again, a panelled room, with mirrors built into the wall in true

French style. Here stands a gilt sofa which might have come from Versailles—rumor has it that it was given by Marie Antoinette to Mr. Morris; chairs of the same set accompany it. It is re-covered with a modern tapestry, which records the taste, although it cannot equal the magnificence of white silk, embroidered in gold (with designs from Boucher), which originally covered it.

Now, the modern Eastlake judicious restorations have kept much that was good in this fine old room; have respected the memories of 1789; but have added the freshness, and safety, and comfort of to-day. Morrisania is very fortunate in its present ownership; the furniture, and tapestries, and bronzes, and china, do not miss the fairy fingers of a queen and her court, nor decay in uncongenial solitudes. These *meubles* play their part as well in the republican simplicity of our new land, as their owner once played his in the fastidious circles of an hereditary nobility. Like him, they are sincere—all that they pretend to be.

Of his house at *Sainport* in France, where he lived during his ambassadorship, and whither he had retired to escape the horrors of the Revolution, and the disorders of the capital, Morris writes this interesting description: "My prospect is rural, not extensive. At a mile and a half on the southwest are the ruins of baths which once belonged to the fair Gabrielle, favourite mistress of Henry IV., and at half of that distance, in the opposite direction, stands on a high plain the magnificent pavilion built by Bouret.

"Bouret is here called an *homme de finance*. He expended on that building and its gardens about half a million sterling, and, after squandering in the whole about two millions sterling, he put himself to death because he had nothing to live on. I think you will acknowledge that the objects just mentioned are well calculated to show the vanity of human pursuits and possessions."

Morris made no such mistake at Morrisania; his expenditures were judicious, within the means of a now ample fortune gained by his own intelligence and industry. His biographer says: "Nature had fully accomplished her part in affording him one of the finest sites in the world, embracing a beautiful variety of grounds, a prospect of intermingled islands and waters, and in the distance the long expanse of Long Island Sound. The plan of his house conformed to a French model, and, though spacious and well contrived, was suited rather for convenience and perhaps splendour within than for a show of architectural magnificence without." It should be observed that the house was afterwards very much improved by Mr. Morris's son, who succeeded him, and that its present appearance is much more picturesque than it was as Mr. Morris left it, when, according to a print in the possession of the family, it had a square and rather barren look.

From Morrisania, in 1807, he writes to Madame de Staël, who proposed visiting this country: "As soon as you arrive you will come to Morrisania, partake what our dairy affords, and refresh yourself. In the beginning of July you shall set out to visit your lands and the interior country, and return by the middle of September to repose after your fatigues, to gather peaches, take walks, make verses, romances; *in a word, to do what you please.*"

That last phrase shows that Morris was a model host; indeed, contemporaneous history speaks of the boundless and elegant hospitality of this house, a character which it has never lost for an hour since.

But, accepting a position as Senator of New York, he was obliged to leave his delightful American-French château, and to go to Washington.

He writes the following humorous accounts of life in our new capital in 1800 to his illustrious friend the Princess de la Tour and Taxis: "We want nothing here but houses, cellars, kitchens, well-informed men, amiable women, and other little trifles of this kind, to make our city perfect, for we can walk here as if in the fields and woods, and, considering the hard frost, the air of the city is very pure. I enjoy more of it than anybody else, for my room is filled with smoke whenever the door is shut. If, then, you are desirous of coming to live at Washington, in order to confirm you in so fine a project, I hasten to assure you that freestone is very abundant here, that excellent bricks can be burned here, that there

is no want of sites for magnificent hotels, that contemplated canals can bring a vast commerce to this place, that the wealth which is its natural consequence must attract the fine arts hither; in short, that it is the very best city in the world for a *future* residence. As, however, I am not one of those good people whom we call *posterity*, I should like very well to remove to old Ratisbon, because I should then have the happiness of seeing *you*, and of repeating to you with my own lips the assurances of my respect and attachment."

Could Gouverneur Morris see Washington to-day, he would find his prophecy fulfilled: it is now one of the very best cities in the world for a residence.

At Morrisania were received the French princes Louis Philippe and his brothers, whom the generous-hearted minister had helped with loans from his own private funds.

He was always lending and giving away money, but so good a manager was he that he had always plenty left. Every distinguished stranger who came to America was received at Morrisania. He writes to Madame de Damas (she who wrote so excellent a "character" of him) in 1809: "I can walk three leagues if the weather is fine and the road not rough. My employment is to labour for myself a little, for others more; to receive much company, and forget half those who come. I think of public affairs a little, read a little, play a little, and sleep a great deal. With good air, a good cook, fine water and wine, a good constitution, and a clear conscience, I descend gradually towards the grave, full of gratitude to the Giver of all good."

"A good cook" was ever a necessity with this man, who knew how to live; and we see in his dining-room at Morrisania full preparations for the great event of each day—dinner.

The dining-room is of a singular shape—a half octagon, panelled, like the rest of the house, in dark wood. It commands the beautiful prospect of river and sound of which we have spoken.

It is hung with family portraits, and possesses one of those records of his early Revolutionary experience in both countries—a *dumb waiter*, such as was placed near each guest, that the servants should not be admitted to overhear the conversation. At the age of sixty-four Mr. Morris married a lady with the beautiful name of Annie Carey Randolph, who became the mother of his only son, and in 1816 he died calmly, cheerfully, bravely as he had lived. His remains were interred on his own estate at Morrisania.

Just one hundred years ago, in 1777, Mr. Morris promulgated his grand idea of the practicability of connecting the great interior lakes with the Hudson; he proposed to "tap Lake Erie." His friends claim for him, and with great show of probability, the honourable title of "Father of the Erie Canal." During the last six years of his life his thoughts and time were incessantly occupied with this great work. "What he then prophesied has now become history;" surely a noble ending to a noble life.

The mansion at Morrisania to-day stands amid fine old trees; a circle of elms of great beauty and height forms an attractive group from the front entrance. Curious, gnarled, old cherry-trees produce excellent subjects for the pencil of the artist; a perfect lawn, green until snow covers it, surrounds the house. Tasteful verandahs break agreeably the monotony of its grey, time-honoured walls. The roof is improved by a turret which has been added since the death of Mr. Morris, but it still has its French look unimpaired.

Quaint, elegant, distinguished, hospitable, antique, and comfortable, it is all these, and more. Time, that unusual benefactor of American architecture, has been touching it up, and what painter can equal him? It seems, as it stands to-day, a fitting emanation of the mind of its distinguished owner and builder, full of present life, effort, work, and enjoyment, with a lookout for the future; no stagnant and selfish indolence could have built or kept such a house. The sunrise which greets it on the one side lights up days of thoughtful industry and of graceful accomplishments. The sunset which gilds it on the other illuminates the page which has borne but honourable records, and promises for the future "a deep dream of peace."

M. E. W. S.